

According to Clark Kersey

Washougal's 'centennial' in 1976

Clark Kersey, though now living in Camas, traces his origins to the early beginnings of Washougal, in the days of pioneers such as Joe Durgan, Fritz Braun Sr. and Al Kersey, Clark's father.

Clark celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday in June this year, and says he still remembers meeting Durgan and Braun. Clark was born in Washougal in 1892, when the new town of Washougal was firmly established.

Clark's father was a carpenter and farmer by trade, and his timely arrival in Washougal in the 1880s made it possible for a number of the first buildings in the town to be erected.

Washougal was platted in 1880, and several historical accounts place Kersey's arrival to town sometime around that year. Clark Kersey says he is positive that his father came to Washougal earlier than that,

in the mid-1870s.

Washougal should actually be celebrating its own centennial in 1976, Kersey believes, because he says that his father erected the first buildings in the town in 1876.

"My father built Braun's hotel and his own carpentry shop and residence about 1876," Clark asserts. Kersey's home was located at the corner of Second and Durgan streets.

Clark also remembers meetings between his father and Richard Ough, one of the earliest settlers of Washougal. Clark related the familiar story of how Ough's name was changed from Howe, and added a few more tidbits.

Several historical accounts state that Ough was a British seaman who had served a number of years on Hudson's Bay Co. vessels sailing between Columbia River ports and London.

Clark remembers his

father telling a slightly different story, as told to him by Ough.

According to this story, Ough (then Howe) actually wanted to be in the elite King's Guard in England. Ough failed a test for a position of the guard, however, and became a private in the British Army, Kersey said.

Ough later deserted the army, according to Kersey, and joined Hudson's Bay Co. as a sailor.

"He came to Vancouver on a Hudson's Bay ship and found out that if he married a full-blooded squaw he could get a large amount of land free," Kersey said.

In any event, Ough did jump ship and marry an

Indian princess, and was the first permanent white settler in Washougal.

Kersey said his father came to Washougal in 1875 from Los Angeles. He heard that there was quite a bit of building going on in Portland, and decided to head for the Northwest. It was this news that brought him on to Washougal, Clark explained.

CLARK KERSEY
... remembers it all

